

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

12

DECISION

TOPIC

Water Trails and Low-head Dam Public Hazard Statewide Plan

The Commission is requested to approve an agreement with Iowa State University (ISU) valuing \$110,044 to direct a statewide planning process for the Department's water trails and low-head dam public hazard program. The Department has been mandated and appropriated funds to conduct this plan under SF2380, enacted as Iowa Code Chapter 464A.11. ISU College of Design staff is selected for its master planning and public listening expertise, coupled with design techniques and testing methods that will respect natural river morphology and stable channel design.

The parties will enter into this Contract to develop a plan that will collect public input and establish long-term priorities for water trails and low-head dam removals and modifications, and result in two main deliverables: the State Water Trails & Low-head Dams Plan and the Water Trails Development Manual.

Specific objectives include:

- 1) Communication functions, including a minimum of five regional public meetings, agency and non-profit staff listening meetings, interest group surveys.
- 2) Background will be developed on the historical perspectives, today's ecological functions and services of rivers, economic functions and services (analysis based on a future statewide survey not covered in the scope of this Contract), recreational and human health functions of rivers, fisheries and wildlife issues.
- 3) Supporting inventories and strategic planning will be developed, including GIS analysis of waters and population data for recreational purposes, relationship to other plans (i.e. State Wildlife Comprehensive Plan, Trails Plan 2000, etc) and programs, review of water quality issues relating to recreation, and development of prioritization criteria for low-head dam public hazards and water trails.
- 4) The water trails development manual will be a technical manual for local water trails developers, including design templates and recommendations that respect stable channel morphology, incorporating techniques such as bio-engineering using natural plantings, onsite stormwater management, native plant community restoration, and design recommendations for support services including restroom facilities and parking, and collaborative development of land management strategies.
- 5) Prepare recommendations and criteria for testing visibility and recognition of the current signage system.

- 6) Select, review and evaluate a site-specific case study of a water trail in Iowa that includes multiple planning elements, including a low-head dam issue, access and/or portage development, and other common water trails issues.

All statewide plan elements described in the Contract will be completed by Dec. 31, 2009.

Diane Ford-Shivvers, Deputy Division Administrator
Conservation and Recreation Division
September 11, 2008